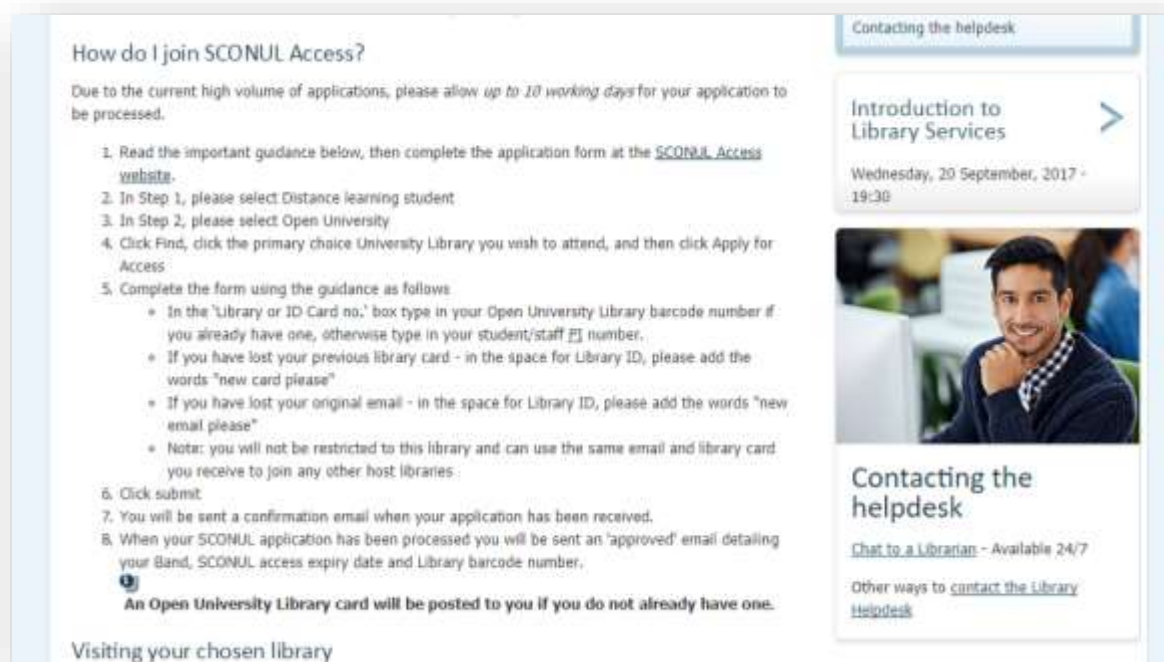# SCONUL – going through the process

I prepared this document as a record of my own SCONUL application, so that I could show you exactly what's involved, give you an idea of how long it takes, and see what problems crop up along the way. So here are my five steps to joining another university's library, if you're an OU student.

1. First, read the instructions from the OU Library. They explain that you don't need anything except your student number to start the Sconul process.

http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help-and-support/libraries-near-you

2. Then go to the Sconul Access website:

https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access

You'll have to fill in a form with name, email address and your student number – and you'll have to pick a library that you want to visit, although this doesn't actually limit you to just the one library.

At this point (as detailed on the OU Library website) you should request an OU Library card if you don't already have one, by typing 'new card please' in the Library ID box.

You should receive an immediate confirmation of your application. Then you wait.

3. Print out your Sconul Approval email when it comes through. In my case this arrived less than three weeks after I submitted the application. If you've applied for a new OU Library card (as I did) you'll need to wait for that too: mine arrived two days after the Approval email.

4. Ring the library you want to join. All of them will need to see a print-out of the Approval email and your OU Library card, but some may also request a passport-sized photo or some photo ID, or may tell you to come at a particular time to be registered. The library I applied to didn't ask for anything beyond the email and the library card.

5. Go along to your chosen library. Report to the Reception desk and present your Sconul email. They may take your photo if you haven't been asked to bring one; then you'll be issued with a library card from that library. Your new card will allow you to borrow books, although the limit will depend on the institution.

For me, the whole process took three weeks – although this timescale would probably be different at a different time of year. It all went smoothly, involving no effort on my part beyond one online form, one phonecall, and a visit to a library bearing an email print-out. So I'd urge anyone who's serious about Classics, particularly at Level 3 or postgraduate level, to follow the Sconul process – as long as you can manage to reach a university library from time to time.

Of course, not all of us are lucky enough to have an academic library with a Classics section within reasonable travelling distance. If joining the Sconul scheme isn't practical for you, you could look into the Institute of Classical Studies (http://library.icls.sas.ac.uk/faq.htm#post2), which has a scanning service and can sometimes post books to you.